



MEMORANDUM

Statement of Adrienne Mathews, Director, Kern County Water Agency  
CALFED Public Hearing, Visalia, California, September 14, 1999

Good evening. My name is Adrienne Mathews and I am a Director of the Kern County Water Agency. Thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening. I would like to be able to congratulate you on the progress you have made over the past five years, however, I have a few major concerns.

First let me preface my remarks by saying: we want the Delta fixed. We rely on the Delta for our economic livelihood, our water quality, and our own habitat and environment. I think we have shown good faith, in that the State Water Project and Central Valley Project contractors have already dedicated one million acre-feet of water to this cause, and have shown a willingness to save additional supplies through various water use efficiency measures and storage. My concerns:

1. Water Supply

We need some balance in this process. I cannot believe you haven't given water supply more attention. CALFED expects 700,000 acre-feet will be needed for ecosystem flows. This is just for the Delta and its tributaries. What about the rest of the state?

Our population is increasing and will continue to increase. California's water projects' operating flexibility has been taken over by governmental agencies for environmental programs, and drinking water quality standards are tightening. We need more water! You really can't believe this increased need for water can be addressed by "water use efficiency" and/or loss of farmland.

2. Loss of Farmland

I represent an urban area in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Our main economy is based on agriculture and oil, both of which have already been affected by excessive environmental regulatory actions. Oil companies are closing down, and ag land is being sold, resulting in one of the highest unemployment rate areas in our state.

How can the CALFED process measure the economic impact of urbanization of our prime farmland, and the increase in water supplies for the environment, against the impact of loss of revenue for the state, and the loss of livelihood for thousands of families?

3. Storage

My understanding of the CALFED process is that it expects up to one million acre-feet of additional groundwater storage and up to five million acre-feet of additional surface storage to complete the process. Yet the EIR documents do not provide any time line for construction of such storage. Well, seven years to think about it.

We have been fortunate the past few years, in that hydrologic conditions have been favorable. What happens to the CALFED process and the water users of this state if we end up with a long, sustained drought?

Water conservation is an important goal, but it is not enough to correct the Delta and meet the needs of California's water supply. More immediate attention needs to be directed to the development of storage goals.

In closing, I would like to say that I am here as a representative of a water agency but also as a grandmother. May I remind you, the decisions we make today will affect the quality of life of our children and their children. The use of our water supply for environmental restoration of the Delta and other areas of the state is very important. It should be an ongoing process.

Environmental water must be measured and accountable. It needs to be balanced along with water quality and improved supply.

I ask that you balance the consequences of your decisions today, and measure the economic impact on our children in the future. Thank you.